A CIVILIAN ATTACHÉ

HELEN DAWES BROWN

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A STORY OF A FRONTIER ARMY POST

BY

HELEN DAWES BROWN

AUTHOR OF "TWO COLLEGE GIRLS," "THE PETRIE ESTATE," AND "LITTLE MISS PHŒBE GAY"

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
NEW YORK 1899

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A CIVILIAN ATTACHÉ

I

"I FILL sarry for the leddies what I leaf dere," said the Pullman conductor in Scandinavian English.

Adèle waited inquiringly. "*What* do they git to eat?" he continued, with feeling. "You will find, oh, a fine air, ve'y fine air, but no veg-e-*tables*, no mit."

"But, dear me! there's a railroad."

"It is not the sem," said the conductor, sadly; "I fill sarry for the leddies. It is lonely, too."

"You'll find what he says is true," spoke a despondent voice from across the aisle.

"My sister's husband is stationed there. I am at the Presidio. They live on canned things, so she writes."

"What a prospect!"

"Do you belong to the army?"

Adèle made haste to say no; but why there was apology and regret in her tone, she could not have told.

"I thought I had seen you at Fort Riley."

"No," Adèle repeated.

"Oh," said her fellow-traveller, withdrawing and laying Adèle quietly aside. "We army people all know each other. We are one great family." The lady took up her novel.

It was on the fourth day of her journey that Adèle Kincaid sat gazing out upon the gray and the sage green of the New Mexican desert. Adèle was favored among women,

for she could emerge from a sleeping-car berth trim and fresh and animated. Her dark-blue tailor-made gown was firm and shapely, the pigeon-wings in her hat were erect and alert. Adèle herself was all alight with the excitement of approaching her journey's end. Her Baedeker lay open and unheeded in her lap. It was the familiar old Baedeker of her European travel: red covers; types, big and little; stars, single and double; and the same patient, laborious style, dealing gently with ignorance and stupidity. Yet it was Baedeker with a difference.

"Of all things," cried Adèle, "the United States! What can he find to say? He has double-starred Niagara Falls. He'd better! And the Grand Cañon. Well, if he hadn't! But *what* else is there? Castles, cathedrals, palaces, pictures—'a blank, my

lord'! Does anybody think that it pays to travel in America?"

Yet Adèle had written her name in her guide-book with a little flutter of pride that Baedeker thought America at last worth noticing, and with a quite new stir of affection for the country which she had always left behind in summer travel. Her father said he observed some poor beginnings of patriotism, and hoped for much from a summer in the army.

The invitation to visit an old friend now stationed at a frontier post had been received in the young lady's family with varied emotions, frankly expressed. The friend, now Annie Seabury, had joined the army in direct consequence of injudicious visits to West Point, and her case was regarded by Aunt Isabella as a salutary warning.

"It was a mercy she had money. You see plainly the risk you run, Augusta."

"Annie and her husband are very happy," replied Adèle's mother.

"So much the worse," said Aunt Isabella. "They are such match-makers, especially the happy ones."

"But Adèle is not young. She is twenty-five, and I call her an uncommonly sensible girl, if she is my daughter."

Aunt Isabella controlled herself.

Mrs. Kincaid was goaded into saying, "Sometimes I think she carries common sense too far. I wish she were a little more romantic in the old-fashioned way."

"You don't know your own daughter, that's all I have to say!"

"I have no doubt it is all for the best that girls in these days have so many interests and resources. It is all very well for

the present, but for the sake of her future I wish——"

"Oh, say it. You want her married, of course. So do I. I'm fond of her. But married into the army, never! However, I don't discuss it," said Aunt Isabella, ominously.

"Oh, come, let her go if she wants to," said Adèle's father. "It will be an experience, an adventure. She is a born traveller, our girl is."

"'Over the hills and far away,'" sang Adèle in reply.

Set aside by the lady from the Presidio, Adèle had for the first time felt alone in the desert. The little dull ache of homesickness vanished by and by in a cry of joy.

"*Annie Seabury!*"

There was a tumult of greetings—tears, laughter, explanations, introductions.

"And I haven't seen you since *that day*," said Annie. "You were the loveliest bridesmaid. You dear thing, to come this fearful distance."

"We're awfully glad to see you," said Ben Seabury. "You are our latest civilian attaché, Miss Kincaid."

"Here is the Colonel's own ambulance and his pet mules. You're to arrive in state."

"If you are ever going to be homesick, Miss Adèle, now's your time," said Ben Seabury. "Look around."

Annie pressed Adèle's hand. The thread of railway appeared from the East as out of the boundless desert, and disappeared in the West in trackless sands. That it should reach civilization again on either side seemed beyond belief. Adèle looked after her retreating palace-car, wending its way

across the waste, in all its "sumptuosity" of plush and mirrors. Home, "the East," the green earth, disappeared with it, but the spirit of adventure was again uppermost in Adèle.

"Homesick? never!" and she looked across a landscape of the color of dried mud. "But have I dropped down on another planet? Are you sure this isn't Mars?"

"That's a fact," said Ben, "all we need is irrigation. They say they've got it up there. Big canals, I hear. They ought to put 'em through this country."

Sand, dust, ashes, as far as Adèle could see—she thought of the glory of the summer on the earth below, the grassy, woodsy America left behind.

"Burnt up, dead, eh?" said Ben.

"It seems like the end of the world," said Adèle, gayly.

"Oh, it depresses me," sighed Annie. "It is *morne*. English doesn't half express it. If it weren't for Ben"—Annie shook her head.

"It doesn't depress me. It is only nature in a different color. I can imagine one's growing to like it."

"That's what the scientific fellows say. Once let 'em get a taste for the desert, you can't get 'em away from it. Fact, I've seen it."

"Ben will have you reading his scientific books. He'll set you down to Smithsonian reports. Ben is frivolous at times, but he does love useful information. I don't, myself." Annie's vanity was entirely transferred to her husband. "I am thankful my husband has tastes. Every army man ought to have a hobby. It isn't safe not to."

Adèle listened respectfully, for instruction.

The four mules trotted, brisk and bustling, over the long, level Government road that led across the plain to the post on the mountain-slope. With a fine display of speed, they dashed finally into the inclosure, past the stout guard-house and the pacing sentries, past the long, gray buildings of adobe, into the quadrangle of the parade and officers' quarters. The sudden turn into the cool green and shade of the cotton-wood trees, the sound of softly murmuring water, the smell of the piñons from the mountain, started little cries of delight from the guest arriving.

"This is what irrigation will do," said Ben.

Within Annie's house, the little cries of delight continued. "Is it the altitude that

makes my head swim, or is it European photographs and Oriental rugs, and a vine-covered porch and beds of mignonette, on top of the Rocky Mountains?"

"Just seven thousand feet up," Ben informed her.

"You will feel the altitude," said Annie. "I shall make you rest."

"I don't want to rest. I feel as if I could never be tired again."

"Ah, *that's* the altitude," said Annie, sagely. "The very reason you must rest. They will all be coming to-night to call—the whole garrison. That's their fashion. And the band will serenade you."

"Annie!"

A summer afternoon at Fort Halona was as dull as a summer evening was gay. Shutters closed, piazzas deserted, there was no sign of life on the Officers' Row save a

dog asleep in the shade, a runaway chicken, or a lazy bee among the vines. There was a heavy stillness in the air, for the Rocky Mountains have few summer sounds of birds and insects; the silence, Adèle was saying, fairly rang in her ears. The cool adobe houses, with walls thick as a castle's, were one and all given over to the afternoon siesta. The most peaceful spot in America was this frontier fort.

Toward six o'clock, shutters flew open, light dresses appeared among the piazza vines, gay parasols flitted back and forth, somebody called from one porch to another, and somebody laughed in return. The social part of the military day had begun.

Adèle and Annie were snugly established behind the hop-vines of their porch. Bright Navajo blankets covered floor and benches; hammocks and willow chairs suggested and

invited the little drama of the summer. In fact, the stage is set; the scene is laid.

"Ben happens to be Officer of the Day. We must spare him till after retreat. I want you to *see* Ben, sword and all."

Sunset gun and retreat came late on this long June day. In her reaction from homesickness, Adèle had taken her first hours of army life as altogether diverting; but her eyes lost their laughter as she watched the band of soldiers, with sober steps and sober faces, march across the parade-ground to the sound of the trumpet. Young Ben Seabury, Officer of the Day, stood hand on sword, facing the troops. For one moment, he appeared to Adèle almost the hero that he did to his little wife. The orders of the Adjutant rang across the field. Presently, beyond, there was a flash of ugly light, then the roar of the sunset gun. As the echo

travelled away in the distance, the band swung off into the bright, brave strains of the "Star-Spangled Banner." The day was ended; and slowly, in time with the music, the Stars and Stripes were lowered. Chatter ceased; heads were uncovered, and reverent eyes followed the flag till it was furled. The act of homage lifted every heart; it was the fitting daily devotion of these people dedicated to their country's service. A great wave of emotion, new and wonderful as first love, swept over Adèle Kincaid. In foreign countries she had saluted the American flag gayly, a little amused that she, too, was an American, as well as certain nasal fellow-travellers. Now, for the first time in her life, she had a passionate sense of a country to live and to die for. Never had the familiar music—the undying youth and courage, the brightness and ardor of the "Star-Spangled

Banner"—touched and stirred the girl as it did this moment. It was a conversion to patriotism. Adèle turned away; Annie should not see her tears.

Emotions have never long duration upon an exposed veranda. First, it was an orderly, who saluted and stood at attention before Mrs. Seabury. "Fresh strawberries at the canteen, mum. Peas, potatoes, new lot of live chickens from Kansas," recited the orderly.

Mrs. Seabury gave her order, the soldier saluted, and passed on to the next house.

Soon came another orderly, and handed the ladies programmes, which read, "Concert in honor of Miss Adèle Kincaid, by the Twelfth Cavalry Band."

The earliest callers were the Colonel and his wife. Then, for the first time, did Adèle appreciate what rank in America might sig-

nify. The little wife of the Second Lieutenant rose as she saw the approach of the commanding officer, and whispered to Adèle, "This is the greatest honor they could have done you, to be the first to come." Annie's humility as she greeted her superior officers was graceful and pretty as possible, thought her friend, but unlike anything else in American society. She found herself sweeping a courtesy, as she had done before English royalty. Nor did she grudge her obeisance when she looked into the gentle and noble face of Mrs. Washburn.

Colonel Washburn was a man of force and dignity, a just ruler of his command. He was a modest man, who told excellent stories of other men's achievements. Such stories were quietly related to the nearest man, but it delighted his wife to notice that every woman present leaned listening toward him.

The visitors were many this evening: young lieutenants, with magnificent West Point bows; captains and their wives, who could tell you tales of Indian warfare, when army life was not all a matter of evening calls and dress parade. The older officers were men who had had their share in the making of the country. They had brought safety into the wilderness, opened opportunity, and carried forward the spirit of America. The young men with only West Point experience envied the captains their Indian fighting, while the captains envied the Colonel the Civil War. The wives, the least of them, had known hardship and danger; and few of them but had her own record of heroism.

"There's your serenade, Miss Kincaid. You must show yourself on the piazza."

"And then a speech. They expect you

to make a speech," said Ben, gravely. "It is the custom."

"Ben, you are too bad," whispered Annie.

"A speech, a speech!" cried the young lieutenants.

"I never heard of such a dreadful custom," protested Adèle. "I never should have come ——"

"Step right up to the piazza-rail," said Ben. "It will be over quick."

"Ben, I am ashamed of you!" said Annie to him.

"Oh, won't somebody do it for me?" implored Adèle. But she was thinking: "Perhaps I seem ungrateful—and everybody has been so kind. Perhaps I am a coward. I cannot be a coward—not among these men and women."

She stepped forward and leaned a trem-

bling hand on the balustrade. The music paused, and she said, in a clear, sweet voice: "I thank you, gentlemen; I am very grateful for your welcome. And I wish you would play the 'Star-Spangled Banner' once more."

II

"And are the women such gossips?" asked Adèle.

"The men are just as bad. We all gossip—I gossip, you will gossip, since you are a civilian attaché. They call us that in official reports, you know. We women are 'non-combatants' by courtesy — though we are such gossips. But how else should we amuse ourselves? It is the human interest. Working out foolish little problems about our neighbors may be vulgar, but it isn't very wicked. I suppose the whole post knows that Mrs. Ames is canning strawberries to-day, and everybody knows that her husband is fond of preserves. Rather

tame, to be sure, but better than to say he is fond of drink." Mrs. Seabury paused for breath. "Annie is a *talker*," Annie's mother-in-law had said, in the family.

"There are things more serious sometimes," said Mrs. Seabury, after a moment. "There is one affair just at present. You will soon see for yourself. I wonder which way your sympathies will go." Annie looked thoughtful.

"Adèle, I wonder what the gossips will make of you."

"Let us baffle them. Let us play them some trick. Let them think I am old—at least thirty—as quiet as the visitor next door, the lady who writes."

Adèle had her fancies, and one was her liking to dress for certain parts. It had lately pleased her to be taken for her moth-

er's sister; in her gracious and complete womanhood, she had begun to call herself "old." She wore her hair in the revived style of fifty years ago, parted it, and rolled it back from her face without wave or curl. Grave colors and simple lines set off her fine figure and handsome face.

"The young men have deserted me," laughed Adèle. "I am always handed over to bald bachelors or elderly widowers."

Yet as she laughed, her eyes took the light like sapphires, and her red lips parted in lovely, childish curves.

"You *girl!*" remarked Annie.

"I see," Adèle continued, "that there are no end of young things at Fort Halona. I hear a twitter of young girls from every porch."

"There is a party of college girls at Mrs. Ames's. They will be heroines when they

get back to their classmates. And every house on the Row has a sister or a cousin or a niece in summer ribbons and muslins and laces. The hops will be brilliant."

Adèle sighed. "How shall you dispose of me?"

"I have been thinking what to do for you."

"To provide me with a cavalier? Give me either the oldest or the youngest man here."

"There is old Captain Payne. Be nice to him. Old captains are always a trifle pathetic. His wife is ill most of the time. His children are all gone East. Do you be good to him, Adèle."

"And who is the youngest man?"

"Why, it's that boy Hugh Gracie. He was here last night, though he barely spoke to you. Baby Gracie they call him."

"That's a shame."

"If you want to baffle the gossips, smile upon Hugh Gracie. They can make nothing of that."

Meanwhile, the Friday Morning Club had finished its scenes from Shakespeare, and had fallen back on dialogue of its own.

"Have your samples come yet?" said one neighbor to another.

"No, not yet. I have changed my mind about it since I saw hers last night."

"Mrs. Seabury's friend's? It was stylish —that bow in the back."

This conversation, as it proceeded, had scarcely the heroic ring, yet, in soldiers' wives, it expressed pluck and energy hardly surpassed by their husbands' courage. Though exiled from dressmakers and shop-windows, they bated not one jot of heart

or hope. "They are heroically stylish," said Annie, "with their sewing-machines and their samples and their Bazar patterns."

"She's a handsome creature," continued Mrs. Ames.

"If you like that style," said Mrs. Pettit.

"Well, I don't mind saying that another woman's handsome. And I let my husband say it, too." Mrs. Ames laughed comfortably.

"I didn't like her confidence," said Mrs. Pettit. "Men don't like it in a girl. The idea of making that speech to the band! No great speech, either, I didn't think."

"My husband said he liked her pluck. He said he'd rather face a battery himself than make a speech before the whole garrison."

"If I were Mrs. Seabury, I wouldn't

have my husband playing practical jokes like that," said another lady.

"I can't imagine what she wants to come to such a place as this for," sighed Mrs. Pettit.

"I heard that she said this was the most romantic thing in America."

"Romantic!" cried Mrs. Pettit. "I have never had any illusions about the army."

"That is a pity," said Mrs. Ames. "It is a great pity not to let yourself go. Just enter right into the spirit of it, I say!"

Mrs. Pettit was the homesick army woman, and always an obstructionist in conversation. She did not answer Mrs. Ames, but looked wistfully across the plain to the little railway station. Thither she rode often to see the daily train come in, and see it disappear on the horizon. She loved every

token of her distant "East": the hum of the telegraph wires, the very letters "Wells, Fargo & Co.'s Express," or a battered freight-car that had travelled from New York State. Mrs. Pettit was, in the world's language, a wife beyond reproach; yet, in all truth and sadness, she was an unfaithful wife, untrue to her husband's career and disloyal to his hopes and ambitions. He, poor fellow, remembered now and then the old advice, "Marry an army girl, one born and bred to it." He had taken a sweet-faced little wife from a New England home, having had no chance to discover whether selfishness or unselfishness were at the base of her character. When he met her on the plains, he began his acquaintance with the permanent and inevitable Dora Pettit.

Mrs. Ames continued: "Miss Kincaid

has begun right. You have to take hold of this life first by the romantic side."

"I wonder what will come of her visit," said Mrs. Pettit, drearily. "She can't expect much attention, with this crowd of girls here—all younger than she is. And there is really *no one* among these men."

"Captain McGuffin?" suggested Mrs. Ames, cheerfully.

"Such a bore! What my sister Mabel suffers! He bears down on our veranda and settles himself there by the hour. He can't seem to get himself up and out and off. And he's that particular kind of bore that doesn't talk about himself, but all about some third person that you never heard of."

The garrison ladies thought they had observed that sister Mabel bore her sufferings very patiently; and hence they had not

much by way of reply. None of them thought it necessary to dwell upon Captain McGuffin.

"I wish," said an emphatic lady, "that Miss Kincaid could be used to call off Will Yorke—to get him away from Mrs. Blake. *That* would be a good deed." The lady lowered her voice, and signified that she could, an if she would.

"It is the same old story," sighed another. "Can't it be brought about? Make him over to Miss Kincaid, and never mind Mrs. Blake. I never waste sentimental pity."

"Poor thing! Everyone knows what a husband she has."

"But dear me!" said the emphatic lady, "if you begin to say 'Poor thing,' where are you going to stop? *I* haven't set foot in her house for three months."

"We are to blame," said Mrs. Ames. "We do nothing to help the situation. Miss Kincaid to the rescue. I have a dinner-party in my mind already."

"But who else is there? She is not especially young, and of what use are these young lieutenants? Little Gracie, for example."

"I wonder what that boy really has in him."

"How is one ever to tell in this piping time of peace?"

"It would take war or love, one of the two, to bring him out. He's not the son of General Gracie for nothing," said Mrs. Ames.

"Everybody likes him, down to the babies. When he meets a baby-carriage on the board-walk—why, Hugh Gracie is simply charming."

"There is no prospect of war—is there any of love?"

"What would you say to that pretty little pink-and-white niece of Mrs. Bellows'?"

Mrs. Ames shook her head. "It will be more romantic than that when Hugh Gracie falls in love — no bread-and-butter miss. He will fall in love heroically—perhaps tragically—if I know him."

"It might be tragic indeed if little Gracie were to fall in love with Miss Kincaid—tall as she is, and old as she is."

"I fancy they are about of an age. But I will not see Hugh Gracie flirted with. I will not have his heart broken right under my eyes. One broken-hearted man to a garrison is enough. There is always one, and he, somehow, never fails to let the world know. Imagine a woman!"

"Captain Vickroy, you mean. It does make him interesting, though."

"So you see," said Annie, as they sat after dinner upon the veranda, "that in our time it is words, not deeds — a clash of tongues, that's all. Absolutely nothing has happened to-day — your first day. It's a mercy there's a hop to-morrow."

"This is happening enough, to sit here watching things I have never seen before— the air and the light and the cliffs and the plains."

Adèle gazed at one distant object, then another, through the fine, bright, shimmering air. Strangely near things looked, then retreated, and advanced again, quivering and throbbing in the thin atmosphere. It was hard to believe this landscape to be of solid earth and rocks, such a magic of unreality lay upon it. The light of the high

mountains at sunset is weird and theatrical; at this moment it lit up the Officers' Row as with lime-light. Grass and trees turned the green of stage scenery; figures of men and women stood out across the parade-ground as if a searchlight were turned upon them. The sharpness and nearness of every object gave Adèle once more her sensation of another planet, with different laws of vision. The air to breathe and to smell was also new experience—the pure, unused air of the mountain solitudes, fragrant after rain, with the aroma of the piñons.

"Sweet after showers, ambrosial airs."

As the sun went down, the light turned soft and silvery. The last rays touched the tops of the red cliffs beyond the plain and flushed them with rose-color. The after-glow among the snow Alps is not more

beautiful than the sunset illumination of the red cliffs of Arizona and New Mexico. As the last light faded in the short southern twilight, the great cliffs that faced Fort Halona stood grim and bare again. By a strange fitness, they rose in form of huge fortresses, with towers, battlements, and bastions: a colossal Ehrenbreitstein, built for wars of Titans.

"Not homesick, dear? You're so silent."

"No, not homesick."

The stars came out, just above their heads, as it appeared, so sharp and keen they shone out of the deep, rich blue of the night-time. The Milky Way, pale in other skies, was here a path of glory through the heavens; and it bent so near, so low, that it seemed a street of the Celestial City, inviting the inhabitants of earth.

"You know," said Ben Seabury, "that astronomers say there's no such atmosphere for their work the world over."

"And what do the poets say?" Adèle asked.

"Oh, the poets haven't got here yet. Give 'em time. They're coming."

Annie pressed her friend's hand. "I knew you would feel that side of the life here. Many people don't. It is all desert to them."

Ben Seabury and Adèle were left by themselves in the starlight.

"Poetry, yes!" said Ben. "I've never been so happy in my life as these six months."

"No wonder."

"Yes, of course, it's Annie." Adèle had long liked Ben Seabury—never so well as at this moment. "What difference does

the place make?—it's *Annie!* That's my idea of marriage."

"Yes," said Adèle, softly.

"You know all about Annie. I can talk to you. It's the first chance I've had."

"Yes," said Adèle, gratefully.

III

THEY stood upon the piazza, and waited for guard-mounting.

"You can see the air sparkle this morning. It is intoxication; it is too much happiness!"

"Ah, dear, if you feel like that, it's time you took some bromide. Do you notice how your candle burns at this altitude—so much faster and brighter? That is the way you burn, too. They say it is a climate for men and dogs, not for women and cats."

Adèle laughed for joy. "It is so easy to be happy in such air and sunlight, in such a morning. It is a perfect place to be happy in."

"Or to be unhappy in, with the horizon a hundred miles away. Supposing you didn't love your husband, and had to look at those cliffs. You are well and happy, Adèle, and you can take the train East any morning. Don't you remember the horror these plains and cliffs were to poor Robert Louis Stevenson, on his emigrant train? Your health is perfect and you came on the Limited. The truth is, I couldn't sleep last night. Did you hear the coyotes howl and the owls hoot?"

"Poor dear!"

"Oh, I shall go to the hop. I wouldn't have you miss that. There's nothing to do here but to ride and to dance. If it weren't for two mails a day, what would become of us! —one from the East, one from the West, with letters, the daily paper three days old, magazines, serial stories, samples,

packages, books. Indeed, I never knew what serial stories could be to one till I lived in this—vacuum."

"Do *you* say vacuum?"

"Not often. Everybody says it some time. But I always have Ben. I suppose I feel cross. I wish the band would begin to play. There they come."

The guard for the day were met upon the field by the mounted band. The gay morning light danced upon helmets and trumpets, on gold tassels and cordons, and gleamed upon the shining coats of proud-stepping horses. The band-leader himself looked the greatest man in America. In his plumes and his gold, he was the nearest approach we are like to see to imperial grandeur.

"'Annie Rooney' does me good. I was on the brink of a headache. Guard-

mounting puts me in tune for the day. To go back to the hop. Two or three men I want you to know."

"Your young Lieutenant—what did you say his name was? There's nothing I like better than a nice boy. I've just got to the age. Then, I am determined to lead the gossips a dance."

"I know a man I should really like to have get a little pleasure from your being here. It is Captain Vickroy. He lives very much to himself. There is one man who reads. He would like to talk with you about books."

"I am not book-learned. I wish I were."

"But you keep up. You live outside, in the world. That is what he needs—what we all need, alas!"

"Dear, how does your head feel?"

"Then, among the older men, there is Captain McGuffin. Ben likes him. I must say I think he's a bore—and such a bore that he makes me a bore, too. He inspires me to say inane things, and that I'll never forgive any man. Perhaps he won't affect you in that way. He is good-looking enough. I tell Ben he tries to look like the Emperor William; he rather overdoes the military part, fierceness, mustachios, and all."

"I am dying to see him."

"I fancy he is already appropriated, my dear. The fair Mabel—well, I may be mistaken. One man I want you to do your best to captivate. You will do more good than harm. It is Will Yorke. I don't tell you my reasons. I will let you see things for yourself."

Adèle weighed these statements.

"In general, Adèle, remember what I owe to your mother. There is one thing I am resolved not to have on my conscience. As for flirtation, you are a good girl. You are not a mischief-maker."

Adèle bridled a little. No girl likes to be told that she is not a mischief-maker.

The post-hall was an accommodating edifice that adapted itself to a hop or a scientific lecture, to a court-martial or to amateur theatricals, and finally, on Sunday, took its turn as chapel. "You'll be saying your prayers here to-morrow," said Ben, in the full tide of the hop. Adèle gave a little gasp, though dancing and praying were to her quite compatible.

"This is the first formal hop of the summer," said Annie, "the visitors being now all arrived. The 'formal hop' means ice-

cream and your best gown ; ' informal,' ice-water and your second-best."

The two stood before the long dressing-room mirror, each looking at the other—final proof of their affection.

"Everybody comes early," Annie explained. "Ben, find Hugh Gracie. I shall dance with you."

Couples were strolling about to the tuning of instruments. Hugh Gracie and Adèle Kincaid were presently one of these couples, and were watched with interest by the ladies who were seated around the room.

"She's too tall," said one. "They might have found her a better partner."

"But Hugh Gracie is the best dancer at Fort Halona."

It somehow affected his stature that Hugh Gracie had blue eyes, a fair skin, and soft brown hair. There was the same little wave

over the brow that had been there when he was a five-year-old, and his mother loved it now just as she did then. Few people in garrison society took Hugh Gracie seriously. When he rode past them with his troop, the ladies looked for him—interested, amused, much as they watched their own children playing soldier. At cavalry drill, at target-practice, at inspection, Troop L, however, took its Second Lieutenant as seriously as could be desired. Communication was slow between privates and ladies on the verandas. These ladies had never learned that Gracie was a capital teacher; for every army officer is a school-master. He taught his men tactics, but other things besides. He taught them how to take care of their health, how to make comfort out of hardship, how to amuse themselves; led them in athletic sports, organized holidays, set up

prize contests of ingenious variety. And when the ladies heard that Hugh Gracie was superintending the Fourth of July games, "You may depend upon it," they said. "Imagine dear little Gracie on the battle-field."

Adèle complimented the banners and streamers that bedecked the hop-room with red, white, and blue.

"Do you like it?" said Gracie, eagerly.

"I believe you did it," Adèle accused him.

"I had plenty of help from my men."

They turned soon to the irrepressible topic of army life. A visitor develops the self-consciousness of a peculiar people, as Annie had observed. "We talk too much about ourselves; we live too much in ourselves. There is something mediæval, feudal, in the way we shut ourselves up in a

class." Annie had been but six months in the army, and hence was full of lively generalizations.

"You are too late for any excitement, Miss Kincaid," Hugh Gracie was saying. "You ought to have got here ten years sooner. Now the Indians are as quiet as their sheep. They don't scalp us any longer—they steal our chickens."

"I had my first encounter with an Indian to-day," said Adèle, delightedly. "I looked up to see what darkened the sitting-room window, and there stood a tall Indian, with gleaming black eyes and with a red fillet round his blue-black hair."

"And a tomahawk?"

"And a watermelon."

"What did he do?"

"Stood there, like a statue, perfectly

grave, perfectly silent. He looked so patient, so ancient. Such silence, such mystery, like this whole country."

"What about the watermelon?"

"Don't tell anybody. I bought it. Then I tried to conceal my deed. I gave it to the band-master's children, who were chasing their goat past the house."

"What did you and the Indian have to say to each other?"

"Not one word. He did not offer me his melon; he was far too superior for that. He simply stood. I looked at the melon, then I looked at him, and I suppose I smiled."

"Oh, I know you did," said Gracie.

"He held up two fingers, and I must have smiled again, for he handed me the melon through the window, and I took out my purse."

"And that is what frontier warfare has come to. The last time our troops were ordered out, we went to protect the Indians, up in the northern part of the territory, from the white settlers that were coming in upon them. My cousin's troop has been sent to guard forests in California. It wasn't so always. Have you seen the old fort—the first Fort Halona—just below the canteen, where the blacksmith and the saddler and the shoemaker are now?"

"Did I see it this morning, the little square inclosure with the high adobe wall and the gate-way, and the little one-story, two-roomed houses under the wall?"

"Officers' quarters. That wall, you understand, was to keep out the Indians."

"And the officers' wives were there, in those houses?" Adèle drew in her breath.

And Hugh Gracie suddenly got angry. "They were selfish brutes to let 'em."

"They wanted to come; they would come, I know that."

"How do you know?" said Hugh, almost roughly.

Adèle evaded an argument. "I have heard of army women," she said.

"Ask the Colonel's wife about those old times. She was at Fort Buford when the Sioux made their attack on it. The Indians won't make us much more trouble," he continued, "but the country has got enough on its hands. Have you seen the paper to-day? Have you seen the fuss Pullman is having with his people? It looks as if there might be a big railroad strike. That's the war-cloud in this country."

And so talking, they passed Annie, where

she sat in amiable conversation with her most objectionable neighbor.

After Adèle and her companion, there passed another couple.

"Well," said Annie's neighbor, "the matter-of-courseness with which those two go about is perfectly scandalous!"

"Or perfectly innocent," said Annie.

"You are so charitable," complained the other.

"Who wouldn't pity her, with a husband liable to be court-martialed any day?"

"But you can't shut your eyes," argued the lady.

"Oh, no," sighed Annie.

"Dear me! nobody supposes they will elope—not in America. Such things just smoulder for years together. I don't see that anybody can help them except the Secretary of War. He can send Lieutenant

Yorke to the New England coast. Meanwhile, *I* let her severely alone." She followed them with her eyes, and wished greedily that she could hear what they were saying.

"I have been thinking," said Mrs. Blake, to Will Yorke. "Yes, I advise you to apply for the change of post. No, I don't care to dance. When we get back to Mrs. Seabury, I will sit awhile with her. Go, dance with the young-girl visitors. Make them have a good time—the young things!"

Annie had not answered aloud her objectionable neighbor's last remark. She had only said to herself,

> "'What's done we partly may compute,
> But know not what's resisted.'"

The signal sounded for the first quadrille. Adèle was happy. The music was far too

loud for the room, said the judicious; but the young people were swept away by its vigor and *élan.* Adèle, in civilization, had had half a mind to give up dancing, it had become such a languid, dilly-dallying affair; dancing on the frontier she discovered to be a new sensation.

"We do it well because it gets to be so ridiculously important," her partner explained, when she noticed the spirit, the accuracy, the rhythm, of the dance. The men moved with military precision and strict obedience to the music; grace and gayety added, the performance was charming.

"I believe I never enjoy music so much as when I *dance* it," said Adèle. "I feel as if I were one of the instruments in the orchestra."

"That's it!" cried Hugh. "You hardly know which is music, which is mo-

tion." And they swung off to a new measure.

"And do you forget all about your partner? I do," cried Adèle.

"I like that! It's a fact, though; you do, if you care for dancing and music."

"Forget me now!" And away they went, the length of the room.

"And how do you like *le petit* Gracie?" Annie by and by inquired.

"He's the best playfellow I've found here."

"You must dress your hair low when you play with him, then, so as not to be taller than he is. I've heard he's engaged to a girl in the East, though it isn't generally known here. I'm always glad of that. It's safer for these youngsters."

Adèle made no answer, regarding a girl in the East as no affair of hers. Yet the last

half hour seemed to have grown a little dull and pale.

"Here is Captain Vickroy," said Annie. "He looks in at a hop, but he never dances. You have met Captain Vickroy, captain of Ben's troop? You know Miss Kincaid is spending the summer with me."

"Does she think it's worth while?" remarked the Captain.

Adèle replied with such spirit that he looked at her instead of at his boots.

"This sort of thing the boys and girls like," began the Captain, and brought upon himself another rebuke.

"The nice thing is that it *isn't* the boys and girls, as it is at home. The best dancer here is a matron with grown-up daughters—that beautiful Mrs. Seelye. And there isn't such a thing as a wall-flower."

"Have you a free dance for me, Miss Kincaid?" asked the Captain, sadly.

"Take one of Ben's," said Annie. "But now you must stay here, for the Colonel is coming to talk to you. Send off Mr. Gracie, or let him take me; you must talk this dance. Colonel Washburn is doing you a great honor."

The Colonel was many years older and as many years wiser than Adèle; when they discussed the future of the Indian, that warm-hearted young lady was no match for the cool-headed old soldier. "Oh, no, I don't agree with you at all!" cried Adèle.

Annie heard with dismay. But the Colonel's thoughts were of the simplest: this was a handsome, spirited creature who had found her way to Fort Halona; very little he cared for her sweet unreasonableness on the Indian Question.

When Hugh Gracie came back for another dance, it seemed to Adèle the return of an old friend; the first milestone was set in their acquaintance. If there was a girl in the East, so much the better, thought Adèle; so much the less chance for "nonsense"—a comprehensive term of which she made great use. Adèle could never have been convicted of coquetry in words, for matter-of-factness of speech was her pride. There was in her somewhat of the hardness of the American girl, whose supreme fear is lest she make herself ridiculous. Adèle took care of her words, but nature had its way with her voice.

"Oh, have you come?" she said to Hugh Gracie, and the color and life in the words made Annie glad that she had mentioned the young lady in the East. Gracie and Miss Kincaid were soon upon the

veranda, for dances were short and pauses long at seven thousand feet altitude.

"There's nothing to fight, you see, but the monotony."

"But you stand guard. You prevent fighting. You are the peacemakers. You carry peace before progress, before railroads and towns, and—happiness in general."

"That was true once. Now we stand round and wait for the next thing."

"'They also serve who only stand and wait.'"

"That may do if you are old and blind."

Adèle was glad of his reply, for there is nothing so priggish as a quotation that misses fire.

"This isn't what I went to West Point for," grumbled the young Lieutenant. "There is more excitement there getting through exams."

"Yet truly and solemnly you have given your life to your country."

"It's good of you to say so."

Adèle said next, in a plain, practical voice, "My idea of a hop at a frontier post, to make it complete, has always had an attack by the Indians in the midst of it. Like the ball at Brussels: 'There was a sound of revelry by night,' and then a war-whoop under the windows. That is the way in your military novels. Hark! do I hear it?"

"Not a bit of it. We shall walk home in the moonlight. We shall hear the sentry: 'Twelve o'clock and all is well.' There's another waltz, will you come?"

IV

"But *is* he such a boy?" inquired Adèle, in a spirit of investigation. "I think not," she said, slowly. "Sometimes I am actually afraid of him. His face is as stern as the young Napoleon's was when he thought somebody was looking at him."

"*Hostium victor et sui*," were words Hugh Gracie had once come across and taken possession of, till they took possession of him. His comrades knew that his lips closed firmly over his words — also that Hugh Gracie was many times conspicuous by his silence.

"But Gracie has ideas—like celibacy in

the army. Did y' ever hear the youngster talk about that?"

Gracie had talked once, and had had long reason to regret it. He had come from reading a book written by an army woman, an account of hardships and dangers borne with "infinite jest" and with touching heroism.

"It's too much to ask of a woman," said Gracie. "Army men have no right to marry—officers no more than enlisted men."

A shout went up from the officers' mess.

"Listen to our Youngest!"

"Not when he's a young fellow, at any rate," persisted Gracie amid the jibes. "Not when he's got to take the worst of the service."

"She'll be along pretty soon, Gracie. We'll look for her this summer." This feeble jest followed the young celibate as he made his escape.

For it may be said, by the way, that the rumor of a girl in the East was ill-founded; it was Gracie's cousin in another regiment who was engaged to the pretty Boston girl.

Hugh Gracie, thus armor-clad in theories of celibacy, and Adèle, reposing in his preoccupation in the East, saw each other freely in the days that followed. They could hardly have avoided each other. Lieutenant Gracie, as usual, was Master of Revels. There was, for instance, that entertainment for the troopers, when Miss Kincaid read Kipling's ballads, till the men stood up and cheered. Then came rainy days and open fires; Annie sewed, and Adèle read aloud, and Hugh Gracie had business with Ben that brought them both into the sitting-room. Adèle read the "Dolly Dialogues" entirely too well, said Annie; for Annie did not approve of Dolly.

The men applauded. "Give us Dolly again."

There were moonlight picnics, like the one at Watts Cañon, deep in the cliffs beyond the plain. It was believed that on the return ride Captain McGuffin proposed to Mabel Manice. Nor did Adèle forget that ride home.

There was the all-day picnic upon the mountain, when the four army mules trotted merrily off with a dancing buckboard following behind them.

"Hold on for your life!" cried Annie, as they bounced along. "You never had better exercise." The mules took small account of roads, but went cross-country, bumping over humps and hillocks, then up steep and twisting paths; toed in around the curve of a precipice, or picked their way between rocks that grazed their ears.

"I admire and respect the army mule," said Adèle.

"Admire his driver, too," said Annie. "This fellow is doing finely, and expurgating his profanity on our account till I wonder at him. They say mules only understand words in D."

The mid-day luncheon under the great pines, and the siesta upon Indian blankets, the pursuit of wild flowers, and the descent of the mountain amid the flames of the setting sun—"Can I ever forget it?" cried Adèle.

Adèle was making friendships; with the Surgeon and his wife, since that day Adèle stepped on a cactus thorn, a no better thing than a number-eight needle; with that bright and good woman, the Colonel's wife, and with that sad, interesting, original little woman, Mrs. Blake.

"It's not philanthropy, I assure you.

It's quite on my own account. She's far more interesting than your Lieutenant Yorke. I can see the whole garrison plotting to hand me over to him."

"You are doing her good, any way. There's *nothing* so good for a morbid affair as a new person. It gives her a chance to begin all over again. I believe, like my grandmother, in 'simple remedies'—separation, new people."

"She tells me nothing."

"That's just it. You don't talk about such things. You are fresh air to Mrs. Blake and Will Yorke. When you get shut up with people here—it's close, it's stuffy—morbid, we call it. It's my theory that those two people are trying to break away from each other. On Will Yorke's side it is only idleness and weakness, all mixed up with kindness. Can't you give him some-

thing to do, Adèle? Let him fetch and carry for you."

Annie's attentions as hostess were about equally divided among a half-dozen young men. "I prefer to have a number about," said the judicious Annie. "I want you to see several varieties. I want you to go home without an interest in any one individual, but with a good general knowledge of the army man."

"A good general knowledge," laughed Adèle. "Annie, you are fun!"

"I should hate to have a young thing on my hands that couldn't hear a bugle-call without emotion, or catch sight of yellow stripes and shoulder-straps without a flutter of the heart."

Adèle bowed her contrite head, and tossed it again as she heard a trumpet in the distance.

"To these young things, the glamour is simply awful. It's dangerous."

Adèle looked alarmed and elated. "Therefore," said Annie, "Hugh Gracie rides with us to-day; to-morrow Captain Vickroy; the next day Will Yorke."

In Ben's division of womankind into indoor girls and outdoor girls, Adèle Kincaid was emphatically an outdoor girl. Her education had happened to fall in with the rise of athletics for women. Her parents sighed and smiled, and said that times had changed.

"Yet our Adèle can never be called the new woman," said her cautious mother.

"Heaven forbid," said her father. "Adèle will prove herself old-fashioned enough one of these days, let the right one appear."

"Ah, the right one!" sighed the mother.

Meanwhile, Adèle was mounting her horse at far-away Halona. A flock of garrison children had apparently sprung out of the ground to wonder and point and admire.

"Don't those sun-bonnets," said Ben, "wish they were beautiful ladies riding away and away with two brave knights?"

Gracie set one sun-bonnet on his horse and asked her how she liked it. "It's *beau*-tiful," said the child, in a hoarse little whisper.

The gay morning sunlight and the clean, clear air set the spirits of the party in a joyous key. Adèle was a simple creature, after all, meditated the analytic Annie; quick to seize every pleasure, quick to spy out delights ahead.

"I am so ridiculously happy on horseback," said Adèle. "Don't think I've lost my wits if I smile and smile at you."

"It's the climate," said Ben. "This is the future great summer-resort of the country."

It was Hugh Gracie himself who had selected Adèle's Indian pony from the herd of the Navajo scouts, and had given the pony's nerves the preliminary training for the lady's riding-skirt. With a soldier's blanket draped about him so as to irritate the horse as much as possible, Gracie had pranced up and down the Row, to the high delight of the garrison children. The ladies on the verandas thought it another exhibition of zeal where recreation was concerned. No one observed that the next hour was spent in superintending the stable duty of Troop L.

"I am getting so fond of Bess. Could I buy her of the Government and take her home with me? I should like a four-in-

hand of mules, but I think my father might object, on Fifth Avenue."

"Do take home the mules. But Bess would be no good in civilization. She belongs on an Indian trail."

"I believe I do, too," said Adèle. "Roads are tame things. Imagine riding in Central Park after this."

"Central Park!" sighed Hugh. It was the sigh for civilization that goes up, unceasing, from the frontier.

"Ben wants us to see his ruined city," cried Annie. "He has an ancient ruin ten miles from here."

Ben rode up, to impart information.

"Coronado and his Spaniards went through here in 1541, and mentions ruined and deserted cities. Why isn't this one of them?"

"Can't we take a cañon or two on the

way?" said Annie. "We might have our luncheon at the head of the Green Cañon."

Adèle was impressed by this light talk of cañons. "The country is honey-combed with them, from here to the Grand Cañon. You notice that when a person has once seen the Grand Cañon, there's nothing left on earth to astonish him with."

"I have never seen any at all," said Adèle, humbly.

"Have you ever been on Nassau Street, in New York?"

"Once."

"Those high buildings on both sides give you the idea," said Gracie.

"Speaking of the East, have you seen the paper to-day?" said Ben. "Three days old, to be sure, but it's pretty lively reading. The strikers are on the war-path. It seems to be spreading westward."

"How far away it all seems!" said Annie, contentedly. "Army people are so remote from business troubles and political squabbles. I feel as if I were on a little island that floated about upon this huge continent. How could a strike, for instance, touch us?"

Adèle when in the world, was feeling, with her times, a strenuous interest in human relations; but here, in the wilderness, a curious sense of irresponsibility and helpless remoteness had come over her. She seemed to have stepped out of her familiar nineteenth century back to an earlier, simpler time, which lived to itself and did not go outside its own class, to take up the burden and the mystery of the great world beyond. The railroad strike which was advancing upon the country had no reality for her. The *esprit de corps* of the army

had taken hold of Adèle, and a certain selfishness *de corps* as well.

Our party took the road across the plain, dipping now and again into deep arroyos, miniature cañons, torn through the clay by the mad mountain-streams of the rainy season—now empty and peaceful, and waving with masses of dwarf sun-flowers. Down one steep side of the arroyo and up the other was a frolic for Adèle's Indian pony, which left her rider breathless.

"Hold her in. It's a bad habit."

"I haven't the heart to," answered Adèle. "She thinks it's such fun, and so do I!"

Far away westward stretched the plain. Cool, silvery sage-brush, dim green greasewood, and tufts of tawny mallow, with bald spaces of sun-baked clay—such was the country for miles about.

"How it grows upon you!" said Adèle. "I believe the desert is a cultivated taste. I see its beauty."

"I wouldn't," said Hugh. "I don't call it a healthy taste, a taste for what is ugly in nature. The magazines will call you a decadent. And you know that's just what you aren't, Miss Kincaid."

"Read Pierre Loti," Ben called back. "Read '*Le Desert.*' There you've got it."

"But the desert is so complete, it's so harmonious. Every little animal to match! Little pale-green lizards, comical little sand-colored prairie-dogs, and the little skurrying coyotes, like yellow mud. And when you get a dull-brown Indian with a red calico shirt, on a dull-brown pony with a red saddle blanket, he seems a part of the landscape, too. And yet I used to have views

on the Indian Question. I have to go home and think things over."

"Oh, don't."

"Pleasant, isn't it?—just living along, with strikes and problems and questions all left back there," and Adèle looked over her shoulder eastward.

They were making for an opening in the bluff that bounded the plain; a narrow pass, between walls of slipping, sliding, black and gray ashes and coal-siftings, so it looked; a place burnt, dead, abandoned by nature. Not a living thing was seen. No spire of grass sprang from the white alkaline earth; there was no sound of bird or insect in the ghastly vacancy. One rider through this pass thought of Milton and Dante; another called it plain hell.

As the horses' hoofs crunched the dry, hollow lumps of slag, Adèle shuddered.

"Will the end of the world be like this?"

It was a relief to find themselves in another open plain, with a tiny stream and struggling grass. At the head of the stream they came upon that familiar American ruin, a deserted ranch; some poor foundations of a little house, the remnant of a fire-place, some battered tins and broken glass. "The only human thing we've come upon," said Annie, and thought of the shabby little history of hope and disappointment.

"They had to give it up," said Ben, cheerfully. "We'll push on, and I'll show you a better ruin."

But first they turned aside to lunch in the beautiful Green Cañon. Its prehistoric waters had dwindled to a tiny stream that still kept flowers growing by its banks.

Adèle Kincaid, from the Atlantic sea-

board, had indeed much to think of, so much that she talked little. When people are reasoning to themselves, they can speak out; but the imagination works in silence.

While Ben explained that Erosion had written its own history all over this Western country, Adèle looked up to the walls of the cañon, so sculptured, so architectural, and she felt the sublimity of Water and Time, working together.

"Great, isn't it?" said Hugh Gracie, solemnly.

"This is your native American sculpture," Ben was saying, as he pointed to a fantastic rock, shaped by the whirl of ancient waters.

Was this the real America, Adèle was thinking, this wild, wonderful, original, sensational country? The green pastures

and still waters of New England seemed to belong to another life.

Spiritual things were happening fast to Adèle as she sat quiet, looking up to the grand rock wall. The boundaries of her country, of nature, even of life and happiness seemed widening all around her; and yet within the new spaces, but two figures seemed present, herself and another.

They lunched and rode on. Another plain and another they passed, lying at the base of the long-ridged, pine-clad mountain. At one point the mountain sent out a spur into the plains, steep on all sides, one of nature's own citadels. On the other side of the world a castle would have crowned such a height, and here, too, the natural fortress had been made an Indian stronghold. A level waste of crumbled stone was all that was left of the walled pueblo. Be-

low, across the plain, ran an ugly, jagged arroyo, deep and wide, the bed of a stream long since departed.

"That was the water of this village," said Ben. "When that went, the people went, too. That's the history of this country—a water history. We'd better look for some bits of pottery."

To the back of the village site lay the long mountain, its rich red rocks and evergreen trees deepened in color in the afternoon sunlight. The loneliness and loveliness of the spot, the stillness that would never give up its secret, wrought upon Adèle. She wandered away to the end of the village and looked across the empty plains to the cliffs, which, in the afternoon light, showed all the pinks and purples and violets in nature. And so, thought Adèle, the five o'clock light fell on those cliffs in

the reign of Elizabeth and in the days of Julius Cæsar. And so the afternoon light will fall five hundred years from to-day. Adèle felt lost in the ages. She turned, grateful and relieved, to a voice behind her.

Hugh Gracie held out a poor bit of dirty white clay, with two black lines across it.

"That is all there is left," he said.

"Poor things!" was all that came of Adèle's eloquent emotions.

"I know it!" said Hugh, feelingly.

"I think of the poor women that lived here," said Adèle.

"The poor men, too," pleaded Hugh.

"Were they so different from us? I can't make them out at all. What *is* there behind that inscrutable Indian face—is there everything or nothing? Could one ever get at an Indian woman's heart?"

"It's probably less complicated than yours."

Adèle shook her head and laughed. She knew that her heart was of the simplest construction, though at eighteen she had supposed it to be complex.

"They must have had something of the same life that women in the army have. Their husband's business was fighting, and the women waited at home. Ah, that waiting—how do they bear it?"

"It's all wrong, mixing women up in it at all." Hugh Gracie's face was stern. "If a man sees his duty this way, he ought to be man enough to live it out alone."

"But the girl in the East," thought Adèle, in astonishment.

A declaration of celibacy, in any circumstances, is a little difficult for a woman to

reply to. All things considered, Adèle had really nothing to say.

"There are the others," they both observed presently.

"We have had a lovely day," said Annie, throwing herself on a lounge when they reached home. "But one thing, Adèle. Hugh Gracie will not be invited here for at least a week. When I think of your mother and your Aunt Isabella—You were wonderfully contented without Ben and me—you two."

Annie had considerable wisdom for her years, but she failed to weigh the words "you two."

Adèle drove her hat-pin into a variety of objects near her. "Have you any specific charges?" she said, without looking at Annie.

"It was worse than that. It was not

specific. It was a general satisfaction in each other's society—such as Ben and I feel, of course. I suppose it's a new style of flirtation—just being quiet and comfortable together."

Adèle went up-stairs, quiet and dreamy.

That Hugh Gracie spent that moonlight evening on Annie's veranda was entirely the fault of Ben, who hailed him in passing. Annie retaliated by inviting over the young ladies from across the way, and instituting an evening of banjo-playing and college songs, calculated to reduce sentiment. But Ben stupidly introduced war-songs, "of all things the very worst," said Annie, "especially combined with moonlight." Ben had persisted in Hugh's singing "Tenting on the Old Camp-ground," which Hugh did, to the admiration of the college girls.

"Oh, Mr. Gracie!"

"Mr. Gracie, do sing it again."

Adèle sat back among the vines.

Ben passed round a magazine, to convince the company that they could read it by the moon; while Annie went into the house to look up some sherbet.

As Ben took up the tray of glasses in the hall, he whispered to Annie,

> "'With souls released from earthly tether,
> We gazed upon the moon together.'"

"But they've both of them got an earthly tether, and it behooves them to remember it. It's your fault—getting him here again to-night. Do be careful, Ben, how you go through the screen-door with those glasses."

V

"Yes, go," said Annie. "It is a pity for you to lose your last ride. You can keep the rest in sight. My head aches so I don't know what I'm saying. I wish it weren't Hugh Gracie, but it can't make much difference, you are going home so soon. Oh, go, go, and shut *every door.*"

"My last ride," said Adèle, as she lighted in her saddle, and looked down at Hugh.

"My last ride," she repeated, as he said nothing. "I am doing last things continually now," said Adèle, very distinctly and cheerfully. "I am harrowing my feelings with them."

"You don't have to go home," said Hugh, like a discontented school-boy.

"My cousin's wedding next week—that settles it."

"You have to go through Chicago. You know what they are up to there—the strikers."

"Oh, I sha'n't mind the strikes. I shall go. Why, I must. I'm to be bridesmaid —I've told you all about it. Besides, I can't stay here forever!"

"Why not?" said the discontented young man.

"Let's take the mountain to-day," replied Adèle, briskly. "It is a good scramble up, but the plateau, with the grass and the flowers, is what I want to remember longest of all this country."

The Indian ponies bent to their work, picked their way patiently and discreetly

among stones and stumps and tufts of cactus, crept along the edges of chasms, and felt their way over the rattling stones of the rain-washed track.

"Horse sense; I know now what it means," said Adèle.

"Horse sense is very limited. These ponies have none whatever when it comes to civilized objects—an open umbrella, or an ash-can."

They were passing a huge gash in the mountain-side, the earth and rock of an angry red, an evil and desolate place.

Soon, on the other side, they skirted a lovely ravine, of gray old rock—familiar, habitable stone, clothed in friendly green; such are the contradictions of nature in this strange land. The desert left a thousand feet below, the four riders had reached the brow of the plateau, which lay for many

miles between two desert plains. They followed the path of the wood-cutters, which wound among pines and junipers, planted in parklike vistas of nature's daintiest landscape gardening.

"This is the strangest surprise of all," said Adèle. "It is all so quiet and human that it looks like 'grounds.'"

"That's a fact, it does."

"How I shall remember this when I am old!" said Adèle, gayly.

"I hope so," answered Hugh, gloomily, and let the subject drop.

"This is the last time I shall see these pines—just as much the last time as if I were going to die."

"Oh, don't!"

"I want to hear the great pines once more. Can't we ride up among them? We can overtake the others."

The tiny piñons of the lower slopes had given place to the noble pines of the timber belt, standing in groves at the head of the grassy, flowery glades of the beautiful plateau. The trail led across a field of yellow arnica, then up a gentle slope into the heart of the pine woods.

"Listen!" said Adèle, softly. Through the tree-tops there ran the sighing, the murmuring, the searching, the yearning, the consoling, the pleading, the confiding, the lofty whispering of eternal secrets. It is a tale never told, like the sound of the sea, like the murmur of the shell.

Adèle had left her horse, and, leaning against a great tree, had closed her eyes.

"This is what I want to remember."

"This is what I want to remember," thought Hugh Gracie, too, as he looked at

her. The lithe, graceful creature, as she laid her cheek against the tree, might have been an oread of the Rocky Mountains. He should come here again, without her—Hugh had the vision of it.

"Such peace!" murmured Adèle.

"No, I think it's quite the other way," and Gracie began to tighten the saddle girths diligently. These sighing, sentimental pine-trees irritated him.

"Are you ready to go on?" he said, in a tone that made Adèle come quickly.

"I am keeping you. But you can come again, and I can't."

He looked away from her. His face did harden like the young Napoleon's, thought Adèle.

"There's a shorter way to go back," he said, "if you don't mind a steep bit. I ought to get home by five." He called to

the riders ahead. They did not agree with him.

"By all means, take the short way," urged Adèle.

The abrupt descent of the mountain gave no time either for pique or for dreaming. Hugh had reason on his side when he chose the most difficult way to the plain below.

"Do you think you can do it if I lead the horses?" he said, as they looked down the steep, rocky trail.

"I don't mind myself. I mind my new riding-habit." Sentiment was successfully routed.

"Tuck it up, and step right in my tracks. Look out for cactus-thorns and rolling stones. Ready? Come on."

"Whatever I do," thought Adèle, "I'll have no sprained-ankle episode—not when a

young man is in this frame of mind," and in ten minutes she was safe at the foot of the mountain.

"Good!" said her companion. "Now for home! I am watching that cloud. It's swinging round our way; it's one of those ugly black patches. We shall get there ahead of it. Now!"

Adèle made haste, silent and obedient.

"We'll strike across the plain, till we hit the road."

"Do you ever lose your way?"

"No. See, we ride by our shadows. People are lost, though. One of our men was out twelve days before they found him, half-dead. He could just stand up, and salute, and report—'Sir, I'm lost.' Then he fainted away. Oh, no, he didn't die."

Hugh kept an eye on the cloud, which hung low behind them—a small, compact,

black mass. Over their heads and on either hand were feathery clouds and blue sky.

They came to the very arroyo that they had crossed at another point on their way to the ruined village.

"The stream that ran dry so long ago!"

"It fills at times now, in the summer rains," said Hugh, "but the water runs off in half an hour."

"It has such a hard, level bed—why don't we ride along it a piece? It would be such fun, between these steep banks. Oh, do! It takes us straight toward home. I can see Fort Halona. How near it is!"

"A good four miles. This atmosphere brings it near as a field-glass would."

Adèle was ignorant of the country, and her companion was not; but there was that at work which made Adèle's ignorance prevail. They trotted along the arroyo; and

this arroyo, as it happened, was the outlet from the Green Cañon in which, a fortnight before, their little party had lunched.

Once within the walls of the arroyo, they talked more freely and gayly than at any time before that day.

"I think the pine-trees set me right," said Adèle. "These rides are wonderful for variety. So many experiences they give you in one day!"

"I've noticed that," said Gracie.

"There was the day of the old Indian fortune-teller. And you wouldn't have your fortune told. Why not?"

"Mine has been told." Adèle supposed that she understood, and therefore asked next, "What was the old creature's name? Who would imagine that that hideous old crone had ever been the beautiful Indian maiden that warned Fort Halona her tribe

were coming—and really saved it, didn't she?"

"And has lived on it ever since—on its back kitchens. But I suppose that's fair enough."

"She looks a hundred."

"She can't be more than fifty."

"And there was the day of the cactus-thorn—ah, how it hurt! There was the day of the rattle-snake—and Ben killed it. There's an adventure every time. But to-day the peaceful pine-woods."

"We aren't home yet." Hugh turned involuntarily to look at that evil cloud.

"You think it may rain?" said Adèle.

"It may. We'll hurry our horses a little."

Ahead, Hugh watched for a break in the banks by which they could leave the arroyo; looking back, he followed the

movement of the heavily weighted cloud that labored slowly after them.

"If it should drop on our heads, we would get a good ducking. Look, it has begun to rain there, off toward the cañon. It looks like a black wall across the sky. It's a regular cloud-burst."

The cloud had, indeed, stopped and stood still over the gullied sands at the head of the cañon. There, like an inverted bucket of water, it poured its contents out of the sky. It was not what we call rain ; it came down in columns and masses of water. In past centuries, streams had gathered at the cañon, to pour over the steep wall in a cataract, and to race down the gorge and the arroyo, till they exhausted their force in the parched soil of the plain. In recent times only a phenomenal rainfall, at a certain point, could repeat the ancient story.

As surely as water runs down hill, this was what happened now. The converging water, leaping two hundred feet, tore down the ravine, ripped the cracking bushes from the banks, flung high on one side the broken fragments of a poor camp, whirled along the reeds and flowers ; and, spitefully wreaking itself on everything weak by the way, reached the arroyo, and rushed onward like an angry living creature.

Hugh Gracie turned to listen, and his face fell into hard lines, as he summoned courage—courage for two.

"I may as well say it. The water's behind us. Do exactly what I tell you. I'll do the best I can."

Adèle had loved a tale of adventure as well as her brothers had done ; but never once had she herself been in peril of her life. Now there was a flash of recognition.

"This is *it*—the thing I have read about. It is here—'the bright face of danger.'"

She spoke, in instant reply to Hugh.

"What you tell me," she answered, and he never forgot her voice.

"We must get out of this," he said. "The first break in the bank, no matter how steep. Ride fast! When I say '*Now*,' obey me."

"Yes," she whispered. She looked straight ahead, between the perpendicular walls of clay. She saw the little sunflowers under the bank, and pitied their last gayety. She noticed how Gracie sat his horse, and took comfort in it. That roar of water—should she hear it the rest of her life, or forever, if she died hearing it? Adèle shuddered, sick with fear. She tried to hear something else — listened for the breathing of her horse and the thud of its

hoofs. To shut out the roar, she spoke to Bess, but her own dried, stiffened voice was a new horror to her. With her utmost will-power she controlled her voice and spoke naturally to Hugh.

"We're getting on!" she cried, cheerily.

"Oh, yes, a trail crosses here soon, I think."

He turned an instant to look at her, and they both smiled.

"We shall soon be home," he said.

"We shall soon be home," she repeated. Was it hours—that ride? No, it lasted two minutes and a half.

"I think it's near, the water," said Adèle, so quietly that something within her appeared to snap suddenly. After that, she did not seem to care, and heard Hugh's voice from ahead as if she were in a dream.

"Ride faster!" he shouted.

"Faster," her lips repeated stiffly.

"That's right, faster!"

He turned back again and smiled. She looked into his eyes gravely, penitently, pleading for forgiveness. "It was I who did it," she seemed to be saying to herself in another world. "I threw away his life."

Hugh fell back, to keep close at her side.

"Go on, go on," she cried. "I entreat you, I pray you, don't stay for me. Hear it!"

The water was upon them, there was no doubt of that.

"Ride, ride! Come up, Bess, Bess, good Bess."

"Hear it!" whispered Adèle.

"See, ahead!" shouted Gracie. "Now,

Adèle! Give her her head. Lash her! Hang on to her mane!"

They stood at the top of the bank as the boiling mud whirled by.

"It will soon be gone—in half an hour, probably. That was a good scramble. It takes an Indian pony for that sort of thing. It's lucky yours has always thought a steep place a frolic. Didn't that last plunge she gave to the top unsettle you? You'd better dismount and rest."

"Yes," said Adèle, faintly. She dropped limp from her saddle, and stood with hand still resting on Hugh's shoulder.

"Do you feel faint?" he said, hoping she did.

"No."

She transferred her hand to the pommel of her saddle and leaned heavily against her horse. Her arm went round its neck. She

petted and praised and caressed the good Bess, and then she put her head down on the saddle and trembled violently.

When she raised her face, Hugh still stood looking at her.

"You have always respected me till now," she said. "You thought I was brave."

"You behaved splendidly. Not one of my men would have done the thing better."

"I never was so frightened in my life. I tried military obedience, that was all." Adèle smiled.

The vexed word *obey* had its solution in the look that passed between these two. But the eyes of both grew troubled again.

"We ought to be so happy that we are here alive," said Adèle, "but somehow I——"

"It takes something more than to be alive," said Hugh, and both meditated.

"It seems ungrateful not to go home happy," was Adèle's rash speech, which nearly precipitated a rash reply.

"I suppose it's the tension—it's nerves," said Adèle, quickly, by way of correcting herself.

"Happiness isn't the only thing," said Hugh Gracie, rather disagreeably.

"And you said you had to be home by five o'clock."

"We shall make it. We shall be ahead of time, in fact. This has been quick work —this ride down the arroyo."

"It was my fault," said Adèle.

"Just as much mine. In fact, it was nobody's. Such a thing might not happen once in a hundred years."

"I must attract such things. I wonder

what will happen to me on my way home. You won't be there, you see. It was a burning bridge on the way out, and eight hours to wait."

Thus conversation was conducted off into safe channels.

VI

"I SHALL end with a dinner; then I shall invite them all in for the evening," said Annie. "That is the simplest way to do up farewells. Have a lot of people about. You don't run the risk of sentiment. I shall have the Colonel and his wife, to give state to my dinner; the Surgeon and his wife, because you are such friends; and one more, to balance you. You shall choose."

"Say Captain McGuffin."

"Spare me. Did you know, by the way, that he and the fair Mabel are firmly and finally engaged? You are one girl who goes home free as she came, I am thankful

to say. I shall put you on the train with a good conscience. No, we can't have Mabel's heavy dragoon."

"Captain Vickroy, then. I like him. He is to come to see me at home. We haven't finished our talk."

Annie looked very acute, and more than ever thoughtful.

"I am glad you don't say Mr. Gracie. I think we have had quite enough of *le petit* Gracie."

"Captain Vickroy is delightful when you come to know him. Or you might ask Mr. Yorke; you have worked so hard at his case this summer, Annie dear. You have really accomplished something, too."

"That affair did not go very deep on his side," said Annie. "The pity of it was that she was a serious person. But did you know that you are to have company East? Mrs.

Blake is going to spend some time with her mother."

"She and I planned it."

"What all that means!" sighed Annie. "Very well, let us invite Mr. Yorke. You shall have the Colonel on one side. He made the prettiest speech about you, dear—thanked me on behalf of the garrison, and so on. Another pretty speech was from Miss Lynch, the lady who writes. I believe she will put you into a story. I suspect her of studying us all."

The reverse side of this conversation might have been heard a few houses beyond on the Row.

"Miss Kincaid is going on Thursday. I know, because Mr. Seabury has just been to my husband's office to see about transportation." It was the wife of the Quartermaster who spoke, the Quartermaster being the

"Universal Provider" of an army post, dispenser of ambulances, kitchen ranges, fences, hooks and hinges, paint and paper. "She has trunks and boxes, I don't know how many. She's carrying home so many Indian things. She's going to have an Indian room at home, I hear. I met her at the post-trader's this morning buying another blanket, and afterward at the canteen, buying one last basket, she said. The Apaches have just sent in some beauties."

"They're the only decent things in the country," said Mrs. Pettit.

"Mrs. Seabury is to have a dinner the night before she goes. Colonel and Mrs. Washburn are invited. Well, I don't know that I've any objection to that. I tell Mrs. Washburn she ought to be in the White House. That's what it is to have influence—that woman. She gives a tone to

things here. Why, I've been at one post where half the people didn't speak to the other half."

"I hear the Surgeon and his wife are invited. Miss Kincaid has been getting so intimate with them! If I see her white parasol coming this way, I always know where it's going to stop. How do you like her, anyway? Well, so I say."

"She has quite spurred me up," said another lady, "seeing her enjoy army life. I told my husband I'd ride again with him if he'd get me a pony. My husband loves this out-door life, but he does hate to go off alone, so he sits and smokes."

"You see," said Mrs. Pettit, "these young-lady visitors stay just long enough. Another month of army life, and she would be glad to go, unless—but you can see that nothing of that sort has happened. Mrs.

Seabury deserves some credit for her good management. I can see their piazza perfectly from my up-stairs hall-window. She has had first one and then another — perhaps that nice boy, Hugh Gracie, as much as any. That was rather bright of Mrs. Seabury, so that nobody could gossip. Nobody has. Who is the fifth guest at the dinner — the man? Tell me, if you hear. That may mean something, at last."

"And did you know that Mrs. Blake is going East on the same train, on a long visit to her mother? My theory is that no sooner did Will Yorke see a new face than he was tired of the whole thing. That's about my opinion of men, I'm sorry to say, my husband excepted. Well, whatever I may think, I'm not one to talk."

"We are at such close quarters with peo-

ple in the army, that's the only difference," said the next lady. "Army people are just like any other people, only they are so near, it's like seeing them with a magnifying glass. I trust I am charitable."

A dinner-party at an army-post takes strategic genius. The plan of campaign is laid long in advance. The lady in command studies to serve a fish course in midsummer with the fish-market a thousand miles away; to order meat from the nearest large city, and a basket of fruit from a town in the next Territory. A letter goes East to a sister, who mails bon-bons and favors; and West to a California cousin, who sends a box of carnations. In the dead of night, the hostess has her inspirations: a new disguise for canned salmon; some fresh apotheosis of hash, in form of a dainty *entrée;* or some original garnish that is proof of the

creative instinct of woman. The result is a series of *plats coquets* that Paris might respect.

Her wedding gifts are the army hostess' point of support at a frontier dinner. Her silver and her table-linen give her serenity of soul.

Adèle had never dined at Fort Halona without feeling the queer shock of one civilization clashing with another. From a parlor hung and laid with Navajo blankets and decorated with Apache baskets and Sioux war-bonnets, through a hall adorned with trophies of the chase, she would pass into another room, where a dinner-table stood before her, rosy with soft shaded candles, smiling with silver, and fragrant with flowers.

One of Adèle's hostesses had written a "Frontier Cook-book," with a special

chapter on high-altitude cooking. Adèle carried home an autograph copy as one of the best trophies of her summer.

"Do you think it's a waste of time, Adèle, all this trouble over a dinner? In the first place, dear, it is never a waste of time to please Ben. You'll feel so some day. Then we have so few ways of amusing each other! It is more time and thought than money, spite of the fact that our tables are pretty. It isn't the fashion here, either, to pretend not to notice. We make a nice, cordial fuss over each other's dinner-tables, we women, while the men look blank and smiling. They flatter us by eating."

Adèle's departure was the pivot of the dinner-talk on Wednesday night. Her visit was summed up in its different aspects.

"You have now some idea of the army,

Miss Kincaid," began the Colonel. "You will help us to a better understanding between civilian and soldier."

"You have a good notion of the face of the country, Miss Kincaid," said the Surgeon. "You've explored it pretty thoroughly. You will find it hard to forget this part of America, I think. It impresses itself. Most Americans know about as much of it as they know of the interior of Africa. But the magazines are getting hold of it; they haven't heard the last of us."

"You were kind to travel so far," said the man on her left. "You took a lot of trouble. I wonder when you come to look it over, if you'll think it paid."

Adèle tried to convince him.

"You would never think it worth your while to come again," said her companion.

"Besides, we shall all be gone," said

Annie, cheerfully. "We army people cannot flinch at farewells. It's the principal way we have to use our courage. Ah, suppose they were going away to war! Those would be farewells! Talk about something else, quick!"

"There's no fear of that—no hope of that," said the young Lieutenant. "It's dead calm."

"You took some trouble to come, Adèle," said Ben, obediently changing the subject, "but I am afraid you will find it more trouble to get home. If I had my way, you wouldn't try to go through Chicago till these strikes are over. The thing is spreading, too."

The men fell to talking of the strikes, of Debs, of Pullman, of the troops already ordered to Chicago.

The ladies by and by withdrew to the

parlor, and Annie gave a last touch to lamps and flowers. She established a detachment of the band in a green nook under the stairway, gave a look at herself and at Adèle, and announced all in readiness for her guests. "For they come promptly, and it is nice of them, as if they really wanted to come. Adèle, you are beautiful in that white gown. Never mind if it does make you vain. *Don't* be so sweet and subdued. It isn't your style. You *are* sorry to leave us, dear, aren't you? Here they begin to come."

"So it is all over," said Hugh, who was the last to arrive.

"No," protested Adèle, "this summer is going to last me forever. Every day and every hour is sharp and distinct."

"Oh, that's the altitude again." They both laughed at the nonsense.

"Which day is the sharpest, looks nearest, in this atmosphere?" Hugh asked.

"*That* day—you know the day—oh, I never can forget the sound of that water." Nor, if more of the truth were told, could she forget the sound of "*Adèle!*" From that time Hugh had been shy of her name in any form, and had addressed her as "you," in boyish fashion. In fact, he had had very little talk with her since their ride down the arroyo. There was but one thing that he cared to say; polite conversation with Adèle had become a mockery. Nothing they said would ring true until the truth could be spoken. If Hugh Gracie's young face was stern, and his words few, it was because he was thinking, "There's not much fight in me, if I can't fight this out with myself. I can't marry her, and I won't be pitied by her. The love I'd give her is worth some-

thing—but it isn't worth enough to a girl like that. She could make any sacrifice—she could love a fellow enough for it—she's that kind of woman — you can see it. But she likes me — that's all. She's frank and free and sweet, but she's never been a shade beyond a certain point. Most girls give a signal to advance or retreat. She doesn't care enough to give either."

Adèle, on her side, was saying to herself, "Oh, I am perfectly frank about it. I must go home and get over it. *Summers!* You either make yourself or somebody else unhappy—regularly. When he is married to that girl in the East, I shall soon get used to the idea—when it is once over."

So two people may soliloquize, looking into each other's eyes, and saying:

"You go on the eight-thirty?"

"Yes, I go on the early train." Adèle was obliged to turn to other guests.

After an hour or two, the company melted away as quickly as it had appeared. Hugh must say good-by in order not to be the last.

"If you are ever on leave in the East, I hope I may see you, Mr. Gracie."

"Then I am afraid it will be a long time before we meet again." Adèle, for the fiftieth time, was puzzled. "The cavalry, you know, belong on the frontier."

"Then this is good-by for—how long, I wonder?" She looked at him, smiling.

"Years, will it be?"

"And so much will have happened, *Captain* Gracie. It goes very well." She nodded gayly.

Her cheerful tone was a little overdone, but Hugh did not perceive that. It

confirmed him in his theories and resolutions.

Then, at the last, something took hold of Adèle, as it often did—the warm impulse to speak from her heart. For, occasionally, the truth does get spoken by people in evening dress. She said, with all her earnestness and sweetness, "You have made my summer—happy"—yes, that was the truthful word. "I shall never forget it—your part of it. And I hope you will remember, too." Hugh looked at her, then looked away.

"Good-by," he said, holding out his hand.

The last guest departed, Annie and her friend stood together on the veranda.

"Is it possible you are really sorry to say good-by to these people, after so short a time?"

For Adèle's eyes were filled with tears.

"Which one are you most sorry to leave, after me, of course? Come, tell me. The Colonel's wife, I should say. No?"

"On the whole, I am most sorry to leave Hugh Gracie. That's what I am crying about," and she laughed.

"Adèle, I *am* relieved," said Annie. "There was a time when I had to warn you. I am glad it has ended so well."

Adèle gave a queer little sob, and said she was tired.

"You may never see him again. That is the strange thing about this life. People are so much to you for awhile, and then—nothing."

"I shall want to know what becomes of every one," said Adèle, earnestly.

"*The Army and Navy Journal;* that's all you need for that. You can always fol-

low your friend Gracie with the *Army and Navy Journal.*"

"Yes," said Adèle, submissively.

"So you have ridden and danced, and dined and tea-ed, and been to parades, and watched target-practice and sham battles, and you are a bit disappointed that that is all there is of it. It is tame when you come to sum it up. You will have to depend on Captain King's novels. This is what they call 'slight,' when they talk about stories."

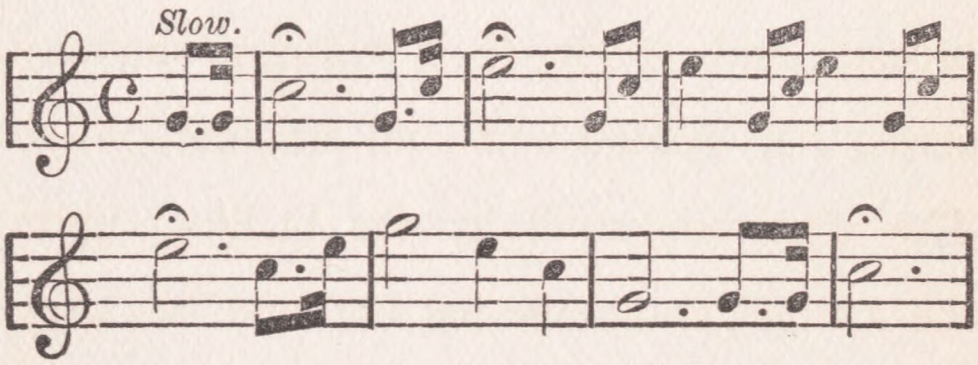
"'Slight!'" repeated Adèle, with something between a laugh and a cry—"Oh, I hope so."

Annie was really too tired to ask her what she meant.

The friends were silent for several moments.

"How still the night is!" murmured Annie.

As she spoke, there came from across the parade the slow, solemn music of "taps." It sounds the end of the soldier's day; and over his grave, it sounds the end of the soldier's life. As the sweet, sad, thrilling notes died away into stillness, Adèle whispered, "That is the end. Come in!"



VII

Annie Seabury stood at her gate. The large leaves of the cotton-wood over her head flicked and flapped one another in the breeze, and threw their restless shadows across her golden hair and summer gown. The afternoon sunlight was brilliant upon the scarlet geraniums that bordered the gray adobe of the veranda-wall.

Will Yorke passed by; and Will Yorke had been wont to linger at garden gates.

Hugh Gracie walked past, with a brief bow; he gave not so much as a glance at the Pelgrams' baby-carriage, which stopped the way. Hugh's face had grown older in two days.

Still Annie paced the board-walk, from door to gate, from gate to door. The Colonel's wife came down the Row.

"I won't ask you, Mrs. Washburn, what it is at Head-quarters. But *not* the Indians, not the Indians, dear Mrs. Washburn? No? Oh, how thankful—An orderly hurried Ben away to Head-quarters. They are all going to Head-quarters."

"We shall know soon. Do you remember when Miss Kincaid's train was due at Chicago?"

"*Then* I know!" cried Annie. "The railroad strike and Adèle on her way, and our troops going. The officers are all coming out of Head-quarters; they are standing there talking. How can they? *Why* doesn't Ben come home?"

"Sit down, and I'll tell you," said Ben, entering the house. "The Santa Fé road

is in the hands of the strikers. No trains are allowed to move east of Las Palmas. There are a dozen of them held there already. Two troops are ordered to Las Palmas to guard the road, and send on the trains."

"And you to be killed by strikers and anarchists—Ben!"

"Nonsense!" said Ben, grave and hilarious by turns at prospect of "action." "There may not be a shot fired—probably won't be. We've got to let them see us, that's all. Let those fellows have a look at the United States Government. We are only going to prevent war, and it's high time. This country's in a pretty state."

"Ben, Adèle must be on one of those trains. You are going to rescue her. That helps me to bear it."

"Upon my word, she is. That's a fact,

she's having a jolly time of it about now. She's got pluck, though. Annie, there are just four hours to get ready in."

Hugh Gracie had remained behind at Head-quarters.

"My troop doesn't go, sir?"

"No," said the Colonel. "Are you sorry to lose the fun?"

"Could you let me go?"

"If you can manage an exchange."

"I couldn't ask it of a fellow, Colonel. They are all hot to go."

"It may be nothing more than to show ourselves for twenty-four hours. Then, again—we don't know what may happen. It's a new species of war—the worst kind, from its uncertainty."

The Colonel put his hand on the young man's shoulder.

"Better stay here, my boy."

Hugh Gracie had borne this all his life. The look in his face caught the sympathy of the Colonel. He recognized a fellow-soldier.

"Get ready, then. We've no time to lose. Those people laid up at Las Palmas are badly off. They are pretty near starvation. The strike-leaders have cut off supplies—won't allow the railway eating-houses to move any provisions. It occurs to me, our ladies who have just left here—well, the plot is thickening, Gracie."

Just before midnight, Troop A marched out of the barracks, then Troop B. The black mass of men moved across the parade-ground, past the officers' quarters, past the barracks, past the guard-house, and down into the plain. At the last officer's house the dark veranda was crowded with silent women. There was neither moon nor

stars; brightly lighted windows threw out gleams that deepened the shadows. The troops passed the house with no sound but the regular thud, thud of footsteps; while women looked each for her own, with the love and yearning of farewell in every face. The hilarity of "action" had died away; the gravity of their errand had settled upon the faces of men and officers.

In the common danger to their beloved, the women felt for one another tenderness and friendship without alloy. Mrs. Washburn held Annie's hand in hers. "I have seen so many of these departures. I was a bride in the Civil War."

"How could you live? How could you eat and sleep? How can we?"

"The country is in danger," was Mrs. Washburn's answer. "They say it has not been in such danger since 1861."

"And we must be glad to send them? We must put patriotism higher than love?"

"If we marry into the army."

"There is my husband!"

Ben saluted gayly, and Annie smiled gayly in reply.

"Mrs. Washburn, he is gone!"

A moment later, Hugh Gracie rode by.

"But his troop was not going," said Annie, in the midst of tears; "Ben said so." She fell to thinking, and it did her good. She even laughed.

"Because I have been so stupid about something," she apologized to Mrs. Washburn. "Yes, indeed, I am glad that they are going to Adèle, going to the rescue of a distressed heroine—fancy!"

And Annie Seabury, after all the protests and warnings of the summer, went home that night rejoicing in a love-story. Her

imagination revelled in this romantic meeting of the lovers. Adèle should some day be compelled to confide to her friend the full particulars. Had she told Adèle that it was a mistake about the girl in the East? Why, she must have, long ago.

Meanwhile, the long train went on its way across the plains—hours upon hours of dead level.

"It comes as near being nowhere as anything on earth can," yawned Ben Seabury. "What do you see out there on the horizon, Gracie? Heigh-ho—I'm waiting for something to happen," and Ben yawned again.

Within an hour, Ben's wish was fully gratified. The train stopped short. At the last station, the force-pump of the engine had been soaped, and, the water in the boiler being exhausted, the train was at a standstill, with Las Palmas a hundred miles away.

The comments upon the situation shall be omitted; they would not make a profitable page of our history. Men and officers stood off and took an observation of their train standing at high noon stock still in the desert; for there is nothing to equal the silence and inertness of a railroad train that has come to a stand on the plains.

Colonel Washburn summoned his officers for a council of war. The thing to be done was deliberated. To march forward one hundred miles was out of the question. Haste was necessary, for the beleaguered travellers were every day in greater distress. The nearest station was that just left behind, where the train had stopped for water, and where the town was filled with the strikers who had played the train this evil trick.

"We cannot ask help from them," said the Colonel; "we must force help from

them." He paused for a moment. There was no lack of courage among the men before him, but some were slower of thought and slower of speech than others. It was young Gracie who stepped out of the group.

"Give me ten men, sir, and I'll go back and capture an engine."

"Better take more than ten. There are over a hundred strikers there."

"We must have an engine, quick. Not more than ten men can hang on an engine."

"It's a risk, Gracie. I shall call for volunteers. You've got an ugly job."

Ten times the number begged to go, and in half an hour Hugh and his men marched down the track, watched by their comrades till they were motes on the horizon.

There was heat and there was thirst, and there was a sand-wind in their eyes, but

Hugh Gracie's fine young face was illumined with long desire fulfilled. To do deeds was man's life; why else should he cumber the earth? And to do deeds for love and for country, that was man's lot made perfect. The radiance of love and youth and patriotism played about him till even his rough comrades saw they knew not what. "'Taint a pretty thing to do, but he looks ekle to it," they said to one another.

"Do this next mile on the double-quick. Try it, men."

As Gracie and his men were nearing the end of their march, there were still assembled at the railway station thirty or more strikers, who continued to chuckle over the neat trick they had played Uncle Sam.

"They won't get to Las Palmas not this night, you bet," was the gist of their re-

marks. "Not with no played-out pumps, I tell yer."

There was an air of relaxation and self-satisfied achievement about the spitting, swearing little crowd.

"No, sir, they ain't goin' to git there, nor they ain't goin' to meddle with our orders. We don't 'low no trains to move, not for no colonel, and not for no gineral! This is our business, and 'taint nobody else's."

"Sendin' a lot o' loafers to set us to work. Workingmen we are. They've got a soft job, those reg'lars. I'd like to see one on 'em that ever done a good day's work."

"If they foot it to Las Palmas, they'll be doin' one good day's work."

"That'll take the starch out o' some o' them young officers. They think too much

o' themselves. It tickles me to see a little chap struttin' round I could pick up by the scruff o' the neck."

"That's the last train you'll see go out o' this place. This 'ere freight-train thet's just come in—well, thet Californy fruit can rot for all me."

"It's worse than thet at Las Palmas. It's folks."

"Well, Pullman's to blame. I ain't."

"Who's that comin'—off there—down the track?"

"Men—and muskets. I see the sun on 'em."

"What are they up to? Are they goin' to shoot us for soapin' their pump?"

The men felt for their fire-arms.

"See the little feller at the front. He don't look much to be afraid of. See their legs go—so clickity-click. They're

comin' straight on. See him turn round and face 'em and give 'em orders—to shoot us, I wonder? They say they shoot pretty straight, the reg'lars."

"You see that engine," Hugh was saying to his men. "That looks like a train that's just come in. That engine's what we're after. You are to surround it. MacKee, you know the business. Uncouple the tender from the train. The steam's on yet. I'll order the engineer out of the cab. He'll get out. You go on, MacKee. The rest of us will hang on somewhere, when I give the word. Never mind the men round the station. They may fire at us, but they'll be fools if they do. Keep order—that's the best way to settle 'em."

The men obeyed. The engineer crept down from his cab, and Gracie's men formed around the engine. There was a

moment of uncertainty. The strikers closed in about the soldiers, three men to one.

"Here, young man," said the leader, "we see what you're up to. Now, we don't want to have trouble; you know you can't take that engine; that engine belongs to the Santa Fé road."

Gracie looked him in the face. The wills of the two men wrestled with each other. Both stood motionless and in silence while the tussle lasted. Among the strikers Gracie saw hands feel for weapons, and faces grow ugly. His own men looked on in awful earnest with rifles "ready," awaiting the next order. There was a bloodless battle of a few seconds.

Gracie turned on his heel, and gave an order to his men. They sprang to their places on the engine: three men sat upon the cow-catcher; two manned the boiler;

two the tender, while Gracie himself mounted last to the cab beside the engineer. The bell rang, the whistle sounded, the engine moved away, and left the strikers to sulk and swear. Only one spoke reason.

"Yer see, it was old Uncle Sam against Mr. Eugene Debbs."

The quest of a locomotive has not hitherto figured in the romances; yet no knight of Arthur's Table thrilled to his task with higher heart than that of the young cavalry officer of 1894.

The young soldier, in field uniform, with campaign hat jammed down upon his eyes, braced himself in the cab of the plunging locomotive, and at the same time braced his mind to think. In the course of that ten-mile drive with his captive engine, Hugh Gracie gave up finally a cherished theory, and arrived at a decision upon a great sub-

ject. Such is the power of "action" to develop new convictions.

When, in half an hour, he and his men drew up at the rear of the helpless train, they were met with shout and song. "See the conquering hero comes!"

Gracie jumped down and tried to get to cover.

"Not a scratch. No glory about it. Any of you would have done the same thing," he answered them. "Don't lose time hurrahing."

Nor did they. In five minutes from Hugh's arrival, the engine was pushing the long train before it, with much heaving and panting. By and by, they were able to side-track the disabled locomotive, and shift the one they had captured to the head of the train. And so on to Las Palmas, without more ado.

VIII

THE two ladies from Fort Halona occupied adjoining sections in the Pullman car. Each, with housewifely instinct, set out her belongings in comfortable order, preparatory to forty-eight hours of railway life. Then each sank back against her pillows and gave herself up to the occupation of her thoughts. Adèle gazed and gazed upon the fortress cliffs, at whose feet the train was winding. She remembered her first sight of them. They had been to her then mere sensations of travel; now they were the background of two months' life. She brooded over the mystery of the change, and luxuriated in its sweetness and its sadness. Since she was now

securely checked and ticketed for home, and all sentimental dangers were receding at a high rate of speed behind her, Adèle said to herself that at last her thoughts were her own, and if she chose to shut her eyes and think of — any one she pleased — no harm could possibly come of it. As soon as she reached home, and returned to her old life, she should take herself seriously in hand. But here on the plains, while the cliffs and the sage-brush lasted—Adèle sighed. She was glad now that she had kept the sprig of sage-brush he had given her "that day"; though she had meant to burn it, for self-discipline.

"Smell the sage any time," he had said, "and it will carry you here. Try it, promise me, on Madison Avenue."

Adèle took up a novel, and read a page twice, and three times, before she grasped its

very obvious meaning. She turned the leaf, and again she gazed upon the cliffs.

Mrs. Blake had her own thoughts, and the friends talked little.

"There's another wedding besides your cousin's that I am interested in," said Mrs. Blake, toward nightfall. "I wonder what I'd better give them. My friend, Maud Amory of Boston, and Captain Gracie."

"*Captain* Gracie!"

"Yes, cousin of our Gracie. He is at Fort Apache. I don't want to give her commonplace table-silver. What do you advise?"

Adèle appeared to have no ideas whatever on the subject. She adjusted her pillows for meditation. Twilight at sea or twilight on the plains lends itself to dreaming.

"I wonder how the Chicago strikes are

getting on," Mrs. Blake said, sleepily, as the porter made up her berth.

Early next morning they learned that the strikes were "getting on" famously; that Chicago was very nearly the seat of civil war; that no trains were moving between that city and Las Palmas; and that their own train was liable to be stopped at any point. The women travellers were pale with fear; the men were red with wrath.

The train sped on with smooth, lulling motion over the even road-bed of the prairies. But there was no further napping among the passengers.

"The miners up in the mountains are on a sympathetic strike, and they're sending their coal-cars down the mountain-side—thundering down, to smash anything on our road that they can run into," said a gentleman from Buffalo. His sick wife fainted.

"They say they're trying to blow up the tunnel with dynamite, on beyond here," said another. The wife of this gentleman laughed, and said she believed he made that up.

"We're coming into Las Palmas. Here's where we'll put up, I rather think."

"Yes, sir, you're right there. Twelve trains here ahead."

"Let's hope there's an eating-house."

"That's just it. Strike head-quarters has ordered that no food is to be brought in on the railroad. They've cut off the eating-house supplies. They think they can bring the railroads to terms by starving their passengers. Well, here we are, sir, citizens of the United States, supposed to have a Government over our heads."

Adèle listened, and was seized with a dread that was altogether new to her. It

was a larger fear than she had ever known before—this fear for her country, for the republic, for democracy. The great war of classes had apparently come, that cynics said would put an end to democratic governments. People had been growing too rich and too poor in America, in fair, hopeful, aspiring, inspiring America, as it had once been. As Adèle had fallen upon the period of athletics for women, so she had upon that of economics for women. She had read and she had thought, not always wisely, but at least with the effect upon herself that her thoughts embraced a great number and variety of people. She had had an interest in the life of the workingman such as ten years before her time young ladies did not dream of. She warmed to every movement that enlarged his life. She was jealous for his dignity, his peace, and con-

tent. For his own sake she deplored his sullenness toward the rich. She desired, above all things, that the workingman should preserve his own pride of place. He had his grievances, that she knew, and her sympathies flew to the side of the wronged; but, in the present crisis, Adèle was profoundly disappointed in her "hero as workingman." With her new-born love of country, she resented the attack upon its liberties. More than the idealized workman, she loved that spirit evoked by the sunset music at Fort Halona.

"Oh, do you think it will end in war, sir?" asked Adèle of an old gentleman who had been making the tour of the waiting trains.

He stopped and looked at her. He did not regard a young lady's opinions about strikes as in any wise valuable.

"War, bless you, no," he said, with grandfatherly kindness. "It's only a question of getting something to eat."

Every time he passed her, the old gentleman made it his business to say an encouraging word to Adèle.

"We aren't half so bad off as the trains ahead. They've been standing there six days already. It's hard on the women. There's one woman, they say she's dying. They telegraphed to Chicago, to know if they could get her out of this, and the answer was, 'Let not a wheel turn.'"

"Sir, I can't believe it!" Adèle sat erect, all pity and indignation.

The long lines of sleeping-cars stood immovable in the noon-day sun. Plush of a hot brown, heavy fringed and tasselled curtains, yellow glass, mirrors repeating and increasing the scene in endless vistas of dis-

comfort: such was the spectacle within, teeming with hot, hungry, sleepless, angry people. Sickness had begun; there was inquiry for doctors. Several women, travelling alone, were prostrated and unable to help themselves. Many were weak for lack of food; and all were suffering for sleep.

Mrs. Blake and Adèle looked at each other and were of one mind.

"We must help; there is work to do," they said together.

"To begin with, Annie would not let me depend on the railway eating-houses, and I have a great deal more food than I need."

"I will bring my cold coffee," said Mrs. Blake.

"I am so well and strong," laughed Adèle; "I can afford not to eat."

Mrs. Blake was still a little tragic. "I don't care whether I ever eat again."

Adèle's cologne-flask, smelling-salts, and all her pretty travelling-equipage were brought into the service. She did her utmost for the poor lady who was indeed near dying, and whose murmurs of "ministering angel" Adèle will never forget.

"I hear you are army women," said another invalid. Adèle shook her head and perversely blushed. The lady with the two-days' headache talked with closed eyes, however. "You are so brave, you army women. You rise to the emergency. I wonder if the men are as brave. If I live through this, I shall always remember your laugh. But your friend's face is sad."

And yet Mrs. Blake told Adèle, as they ate two biscuits apiece for supper, that she had not been so happy for two years. "I feel as if I had got back to the real world and real life, where there are so many people

and so many things to do. I had that feeling when I first saw you."

Next morning the old gentleman went out in quest of news, as he would have gone out to buy a morning paper. When he returned to the ladies, big head-lines were to be read in his excited countenance.

"You needn't have another minute's fear," he said to Adèle. "They've done just what I said they ought to do. They'll only have to show their bayonets, and these trains move on, sir. We're going to see who's got the upper hand on this continent. I said, first thing, they ought to order out the troops for us as well as for the Chicago folks. And they'll be here by noon, sure."

"Troops, troops," repeated Adèle, "what—where—what troops?"

"They're on their way from Fort Halona."

"From Fort Halona?"

"It's a post on west of here. There's a good deal of the time I don't have any use for a standing army idling round; but when you do want 'em, you want 'em bad." He looked for Adèle's assent. She had turned to Mrs. Blake.

"Which men will come?"

"Oh, I wonder," whispered Mrs. Blake.

At first there was general rejoicing over the news of the morning. Then people talked of danger ahead, when strikers and soldiers should meet. Adèle had simple feminine prejudices against dynamite and gunpowder, but her mind was now working by more complicated laws. She exulted in the danger of the situation and magnified it, for the sweetness of being rescued from peril by the man—yes, the man she loved; for the girl in the East had been exorcised.

Mrs. Blake's thoughts were agitated. Was a difficult work all to be undone? Was fate thrusting upon her again what she had tried so hard to escape from? That she had begun to reason again about "fate" was matter for alarm. But fate, or something better, mercifully detained at Fort Halona the First Lieutenant of Troop L.

Noon came, and the troops were not there. Hour after hour passed, the hardest hours of all the waiting. An attack by the strikers on the route was plainly what had befallen the Government train.

The long summer afternoon wore away. Real suffering had now set in among the wayfarers. Not alone delicate women and children, but such women as Adèle herself felt the heat and crowding, and lack of food and sleep. The day before, Adèle had been hungry; to-day she felt faint and a trifle

pathetic. Mirrors abounded, and she saw with interest the dark circles under her eyes. She kept a stout heart, and insisted that such a huge adventure was worth all it cost. This she said to the head physician of the strange hospital, and he looked at her anxiously, and bade her get out into the air at once. "Take a little run before dark."

Adèle stood upon a heap of railway ties and strained her eyes to the western horizon. Was there danger and disaster beyond there? She could not wait, she could not bear it any longer; it was too much to expect of any woman's nerves. Adèle felt for her handkerchief.

"That's right," shouted the old gentleman, swinging his arms frantically. "Have your handkerchiefs ready to wave at 'em. They're coming! they're coming! The

man on the roof there with a field-glass—he sees the train coming! Hurrah, hurrah!"

Just as the night fell, the Government train drew in, amid an uproar of rejoicing. Handkerchiefs waved from every car-window of the twelve long trains.

The troops pitched camp for the night, fires were lighted, and odors of bacon and coffee floated over to our famine-stricken travellers.

The faithful old gentleman appeared, and begged them to go out under his escort to see the soldiers cook their supper.

"It isn't a sight you can see every day."

But the ladies were tired; they would wait till to-morrow.

"I heard a pretty good story out there," said their friend; "how they managed to get here. Their engine broke down—strikers soaped their pump. One young

fellow, a lieutenant they called him, took a handful of men and footed it back ten miles to a reg'lar nest of strikers, and there he just took a locomotive right from under their noses, with the whole lot of 'em ready to fire. Never said a word to 'em, he didn't; just walked off with their engine."

"What was his name? did they say?" asked Adèle.

"A queer kind of a name, though there was a General Gracie did good service in the Civil War. But that's the kind of a chap for me. He may not get into the history books, but he's what I call a hero. Now, don't you say so?"

Adèle could not talk when Mrs. Blake would dilate upon the incident. She only looked at her with large, rapt eyes, tears close behind them.

"I hope this will end their calling him

Baby Gracie," said Mrs. Blake. "I think he is *fine*, that boy!—I have always thought so. And I know something that you don't know."

"What?" Adèle whispered.

"I see such things. I have an instinct about them." Mrs. Blake's lip trembled, as she stopped a sigh half-way. "I saw, if nobody else did."

Then Adèle's tears brimmed over, and she turned to the window.

"And now you are going to meet—I am so happy!"

Still Adèle said nothing.

"There they are at the end of the car this moment. I'm going. Come!"

Adèle did not stir. She heard Hugh Gracie's voice in a chorus of

"There's Mrs. Blake!"

"A pretty mess!"

"A regular lark!"

"What kind of a picnic was it, Mrs. Blake?"

"A pretty wind-up for Miss Kincaid's peaceful summer. You'd both better come back with us. Don't stir without a military escort after this. Have you heard what Gracie did? Gracie, show up there."

Still Adèle did not appear. Mrs. Blake must go back to find her.

For, with the evasion of a heart at bay, Adèle had said, suddenly, "Porter, will you make up my berth?"

"You'se all safe now, Miss. You kin sleep. I make it up right away."

Adèle lay awake far into the night. She raised the woollen window-shade, drew her pillow close to the glass, and so looked out upon the white tents that gleamed in the moonlight. She closed her eyes in sweet

peace and safety, then opened them again to search for one tent of them all. She pictured, dramatized, acted over and over again, Hugh Gracie's deed of valor. To-morrow she should see him; she rehearsed the scene. It would be on the railroad track, by the steps of her vestibule car. There would be people about, but she should manage to say how she admired his bravery. No, not that—every stranger would say that. What then? She searched her heart in preparation for the meeting of the morning, and after a long vigil, fell into an uncertain sleep.

Adèle was awakened suddenly by the jerking of the train beneath her, the long quiver of the brakes, the bumping over ties, and then a steady onward movement. She sat up in her berth, sharply and painfully awake. She heard a voice in the

aisle; it was that of the faithful newsvender.

"Guess you all wonder what's happened," said the old gentlemen, addressing the heavy stuff curtains on either side of the narrow aisle. "There's a fellow in the next car that has got to get to Chicago, and he told the railroad folks if they'd get this train out ahead in the night, he'd make it right with 'em. They agreed to do it, if the army folks did. We're armed to the teeth, you know. That fellow's been a-ragin' and a-rarin' these three days. Guess we ain't any of us going to object to getting out ahead."

Adèle sank back upon her tossed and shapeless pillows. She moaned to herself at the wretched caprice that, within hearing of Hugh's voice, had held her away from him. She could not account for

her own woman's heart. And now, by this foolish accident, they were finally parted. To be sure, they had separated once before. "Ah, but I have found out now. I had to find it out by going away. Now I know it is far more than I thought—it is not one summer—it is my life. Oh, Hugh, Hugh!" she sobbed.

"He thinks I didn't care. He will never know that I do care," she murmured. "Everything is dropped—just where it was that night of the good-byes. I wonder two people *ever* find each other in such a world, at the mercy of such chances. A Chicago man! There is a funny side. But oh, I cannot laugh," and she proved it by her tears.

Adèle had no other thoughts but these for days, and the friends to whom she went said they had always heard that high alti-

tude had its bad effects. However, I give an extract from a letter written by Aunt Isabella to Adèle's mother six weeks later :

"I have heard that the young man has appeared at your house, and I am *prepared.* I shall never say, *I told you so,* but I do say that I hope you have found out the *truth* about your safe, sensible, practical twenty-five-year-old daughter. You wished that she were 'a little more romantic in the old-fashioned way.' Are you satisfied? Is this old-fashioned enough? Well, I believe I am rather conservative myself. Give the dear child my love, and tell her to bring him to see me."

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